



# COMMERCIAL PERMITTING 101

*A Representation of the Seminar Presented on May 31, 2007*

CITY OF HOUSTON  
PUBLIC WORKS AND ENGINEERING  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIVISION

This document is a brief overview of the typical commercial building permit process for the City of Houston. Links have been added throughout for reference.

Please contact the Code Enforcement Office for assistance with specific questions pertaining to your individual project at 832-394-9000.



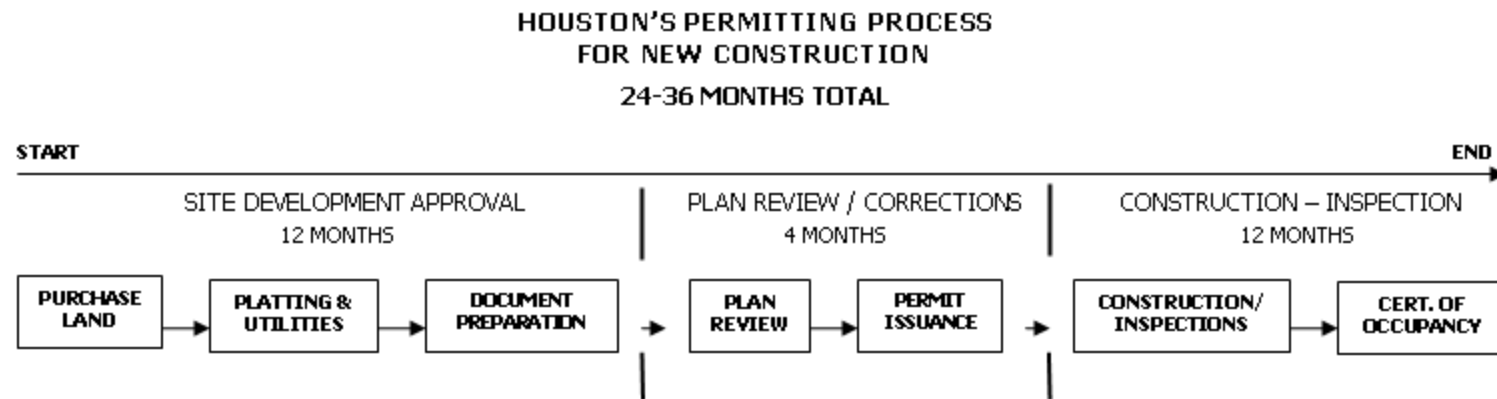
# Improved Services



**Since the New Express Plan Review Program was established July 1, 2006 we have instituted the following improvements...**

- ♦ The average commercial plan review turnaround time is 11 Days per plan submittal!
- ♦ Increased inspection time on the job site
- ♦ The Customer Assistance and Code Development Office, providing ombudsman services
- ♦ More Online Services

# Planning & Research



**Research, Research, Research – Before you buy,** consider the following:

- ✓ Make sure you can financially and legally build your proposed project
- ✓ Legal – Deed restrictions and property liens
- ✓ Survey and property lines (Ensure that your structure can be built in the proposed location)
- ✓ Utility availability (Assess if water and sanitary capacity and utilities are available or if additional fees may be required)
- ✓ Platting (May be required if there is a change of use or occupancy for the property)
- ✓ Parking (Determine requirements for the type of occupancy proposed)
- ✓ Setback (May be required where the proposed business abuts a major thoroughfare)
- ✓ Floodplain (Refer to Chapter 19 of the Code of Ordinances)
- ✓ Research existing Certificates of Occupancy

# Design Preparation



◆ **Does my project require an Engineer or Architect?**

- Click on the applicable link for flow charts from the Texas Boards of [Architectural Examiners](#) & [Professional Engineers](#)

◆ **What is the scope of work for this project classified as?**

- New Construction (ground up)
- Build out (tenant improvement)
- Remodel (extensive and minor)
- Repair (replacing - like for like materials)
- Expansion/addition (new square footage)
- Change of Use (converting from one occupancy to another such as retail to assembly)

◆ **What codes are in effect?**

- 2006 International Building Code
- 2006 Uniform Mechanical Code
- 2011 National Electrical Code
- 2006 Uniform Plumbing Code
- 2006 International Fire Code
- 2009 International Energy Conservation Code, or
- ASHRAE Standard 90.1-2007
- City of Houston Design Manual
- City of Houston Code of Ordinances

Click here for the [Houston Amendments](#) or for the [Design Manual](#).

# Additional Requirements

## ◆ Does the project require a specialized consultant or an additional step?

- ◆ Historical Review
- ◆ Asbestos Survey
- ◆ Elevation Certificates
- ◆ Sprinklers
- ◆ Fire Alarm
- ◆ Electronic Locks
- ◆ TDLR Accessibility Review

## ◆ Who can purchase what permits and when?

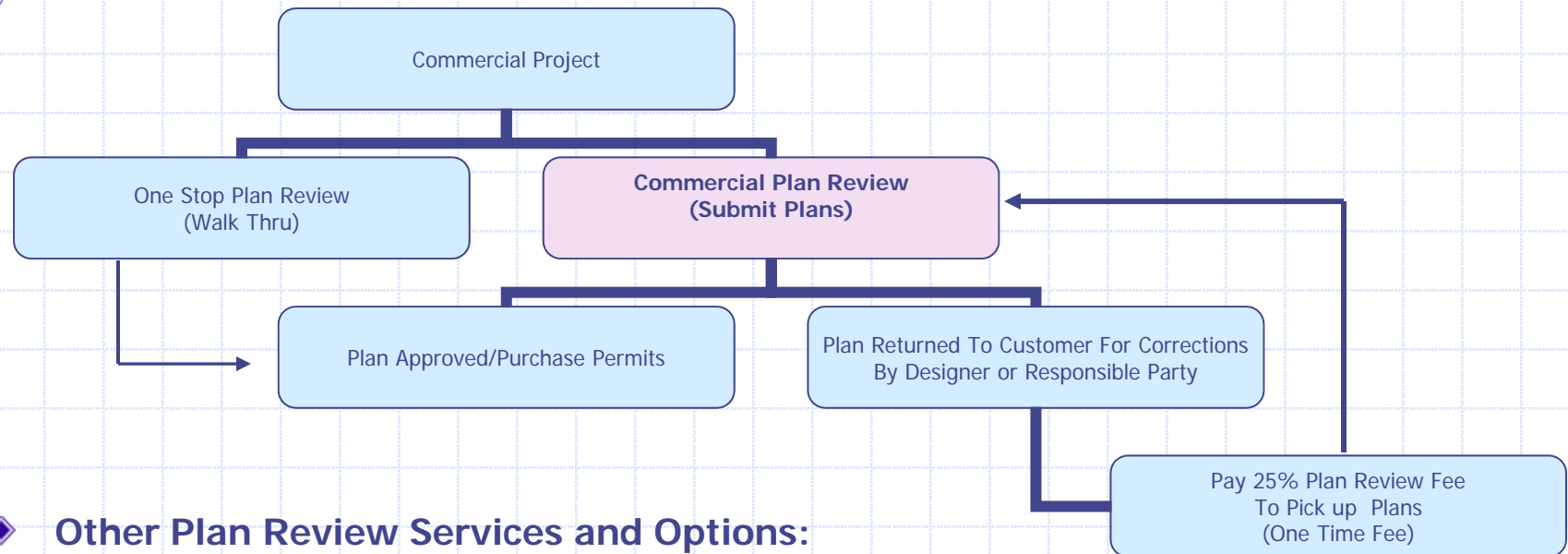
- The building permit may be purchased by the owner, agent, contractor. General Contractors are not required to be licensed.
- Licensed contractors can purchase trade permits after the building permit has been sold.
  - ◆ Electrical
  - ◆ Mechanical
  - ◆ Plumbing
  - ◆ Sprinklers
  - ◆ Sidewalk

# Application & Plan Submittal

- ◆ Commercial Building Application (with assigned project number)
- ◆ 2 complete sets of plans (4 sets if hazmat/high piled storage is involved)
- ◆ [Fill & Grade Worksheet](#)
- ◆ Storm and Water Utility Letter
- ◆ [Waste Water Capacity Reservation Letter](#)
- ◆ Asbestos Survey
- ◆ Energy Software Report
- ◆ [HFD Owner's Statement of Intended Use for Storage Occupancies](#)
- ◆ Ensure [Plan Review Prerequisites](#) are met

Remember: Addresses are critical and must be verified for new construction!

# Plan Review Process -Overview-



## ◆ Other Plan Review Services and Options:

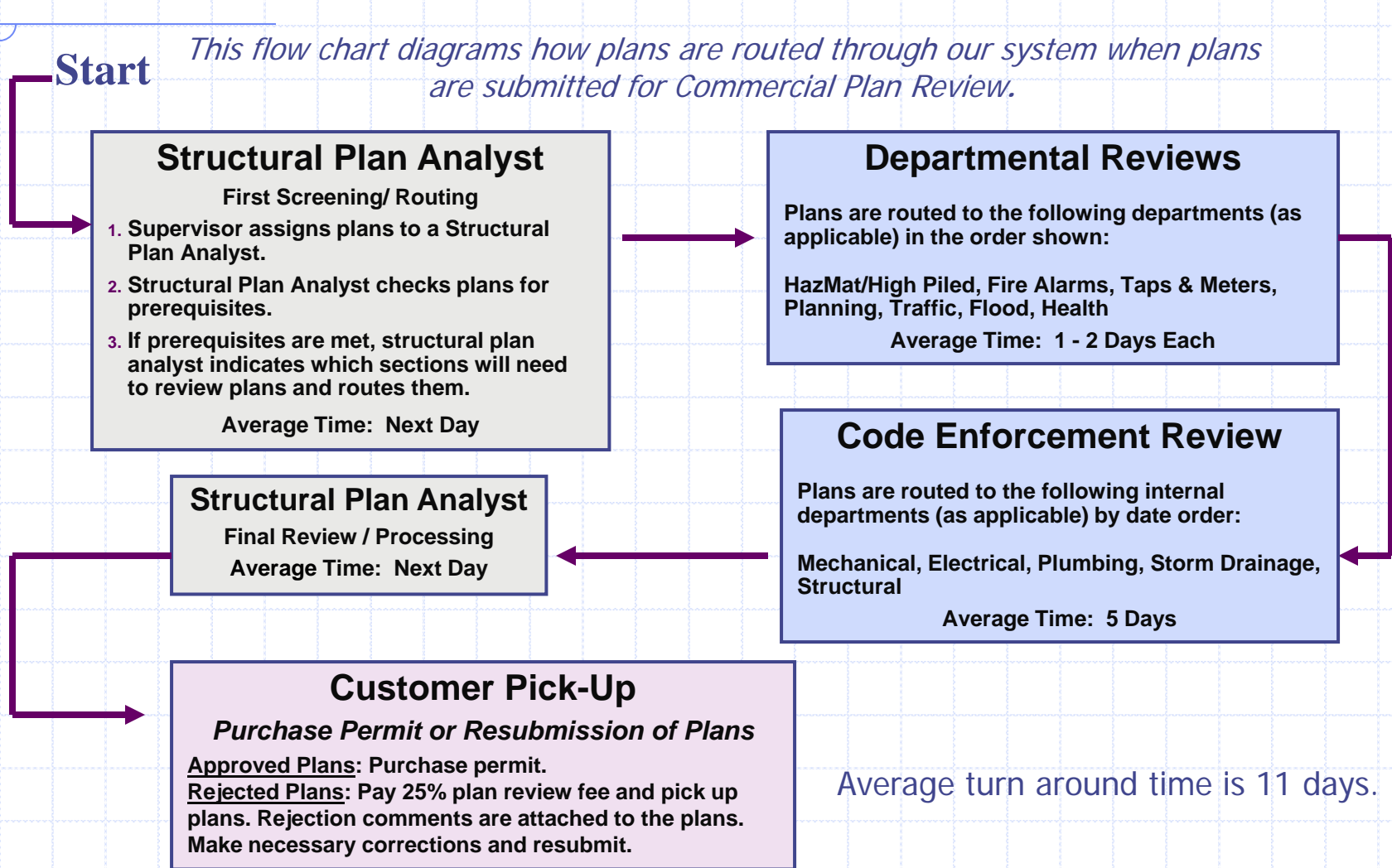
- ✓ One Stop Plan Review (Allows customers with minor remodels/lease space build outs to have a plan analyst review plans and have the permit issued in the same day if certain restrictions are met; including 30 minute maximum plan review.)
- ✓ Quick Start Program (For projects exceeding \$1 million valuation with a limited number of reviews remaining, a 24 hour turnaround is available.)
- ✓ LEED Incentive
- ✓ Plan Analyst and Design Professional appointments (In order to resolve outstanding comments for approval)
- ✓ Online Status Check and Viewing of Rejection Comments at [www.houstonpermits.com](http://www.houstonpermits.com)

Contact Plan Review at 832-394-8810 for more information.

# Flow Chart Sequence for Submission of Plans

**Start**

*This flow chart diagrams how plans are routed through our system when plans are submitted for Commercial Plan Review.*





# Phased Permitting

The city allows phased permitting for each stage of construction prior to submitting or permitting the next phase. This process may be useful for fast track projects where design continues beyond the schedule to break ground. For example:

- ◆ Site Grading
- ◆ Site Paving and Underground Utilities
- ◆ Site and Foundation (requires recorded plat)
- ◆ Superstructure (concrete buildings, or non-rated steel)
- ◆ Shell only
- ◆ Shell and core
- ◆ Build outs by floor (non combustible only)



Note: Phased permits must be obtained in order of construction.

# Deferred Submittals

The city allows deferred submittals for elements of a building that are not typically designed by the time the general design plans are submitted for code review.  
For example:

## Deferrals

- ◆ Truss Details
- ◆ Curtain Walls
- ◆ Pre-cast Concrete (non-rated)
- ◆ Metal buildings (non-rated)
- ◆ Pre-fab storage racks

## Required

- ◆ Sprinklers
- ◆ Electronic Locks



Note: Sprinkler plans and Electronic Lock plans are required to be submitted separately, not deferred.

# Inspections and Utility Release

- ◆ Once permit is purchased work may begin
- ◆ Plans and permits must remain on the job site for inspections
- ◆ Inspections are required at various stages of construction
- ◆ Call or Click to schedule Inspections
  - (713) 222-9922 (IVR)
  - [www.houstonpermits.com](http://www.houstonpermits.com)
- ◆ Temporary Utilities may be obtained after all permits are purchased
  - Temporary Cut In / Temporary Gas - permit must be purchased
  - Complete and submit request for temporary utilities application (TLIF)
- ◆ All revisions must be approved prior to Final Inspection
- ◆ All deferred submittal items must be completed prior to Final Inspection
- ◆ After all inspections are complete - request Certificate(s) of Occupancy
- ◆ Remodels/Repairs are usually issued a Certificate of Compliance

# Website Overview

## Online Permits

### Welcome to the City of Houston's Online Permits Website

#### I-Permits - Customer / Contractor Portal

First Time User

[Login](#)

For questions, please contact us at [rmcacd@houston.tx.gov](mailto:rmcacd@houston.tx.gov)

#### Building Permit - Fee Estimator

Fee Calculator

For questions about the PERMIT FEE CALCULATOR please contact us at [luis.villasana@houston.tx.gov](mailto:luis.villasana@houston.tx.gov)

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The Building Permit Fee Calculator is unavailable for required maintenance. In the interim, please refer to the [Permit Fee Schedule](#).

#### Schedule Inspections

[Schedule Inspections](#) and [Inspections History](#)

To receive inspection results by e-mail or cell phone [Click Here](#).

For questions about SCHEDULING INSPECTIONS please [Click Here](#)

#### Check Permit Status

##### Plan Review

[Plan Review Status \(Real Time Pages\)](#)

##### Permits Sold

[Search for Sold Permits \(sold permits for the last 3 years\)](#)

The online sold permit search only supports Windows with Internet Explorer (IE Version 8 or older).

#### Other Information

[Code Enforcement Main Page](#)

*Purchase Permits  
(Certain Restrictions Apply)*

*Estimate Building  
Permit Fee*

*Schedule Inspections*

*Check the Status  
of Plans*

*Code Enforcement  
Home Page*

Click here to visit [Online Permits](#) or the [Code Enforcement Main Web Page](#)

# Related Fees

<b>FEES</b> <sup>1, 2</sup> <b>SCOPE</b>	Development Review Fee (paid prior to submittal)	WCR Application Fee (paid when submitted)	Impact Fee (prior to bldg permit)	Building Permit Fee (prior to trade permit fees)
New Construction	✓	✓	✓	✓
Addition	✓	✓	✓	✓
Interior Build Out		✓ <sup>3</sup>	✓ <sup>3</sup>	✓
Remodel		✓ <sup>3</sup>	✓ <sup>3</sup>	✓

1. Plan Review Fee is 25% of permit fee. (non refundable)
2. Flood Plain fee - only if applicable
3. For change of use or added load

[Click here](#) to see a complete copy of the Permit Fees.



# THINGS TO REMEMBER

## ◆ APPLICATIONS

The original commercial application is required to purchase the building permit. If the application is lost or misplaced, only the original applicant may complete a duplicate application.

## ◆ PLAN REVIEW

Projects over \$50,000 require a TDLR number for the architectural barriers act.

Some of the frequently missed plan review prerequisites include:

- ◆ Water Availability Letters
- ◆ Engineered structural plans (sealed and signed)
- ◆ Hazmat/Hi Piled Form or Exemption Form
- ◆ Code Analysis
- ◆ Submitting final design plans and not preliminary plans

## ◆ TAPS & METERS

Apply for the letter of availability prior to submitting plans

- ◆ Response will be mailed to you (WCR letter)
- ◆ Pay impact fees
- ◆ Submit impact fee receipt and WCR letter with plans

## ◆ TOP 10 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PERMITTING

## ◆ FREQUENTLY MISSED INSPECTION ITEMS

# For More Information...

## Please Call Us:

- ◆ General Information
  - 832-394-9000
- ◆ Commercial Plan Review
  - 832-394-8810
- ◆ Planning
  - 832-394-9091
- ◆ Taps and Meters
  - 832-394-8888
- ◆ Inspections
  - 713-222-9922

## Or Visit Us Online:

- ◆ Code Enforcement
  - [www.houstonpermittingcenter.org/code-enforcement.html](http://www.houstonpermittingcenter.org/code-enforcement.html)
- ◆ Permits/Inspections/Plan Review
  - [www.houstonpermits.com](http://www.houstonpermits.com)
- ◆ Planning & Development
  - [www.houstonplanning.com](http://www.houstonplanning.com)
- ◆ Houston Fire Department
  - [www.houstonfire.com](http://www.houstonfire.com)
- ◆ General Information
  - [www.houstontx.gov/311](http://www.houstontx.gov/311)
- ◆ Flood Maps
  - [www.tsarp.org](http://www.tsarp.org)
- ◆ City of Houston Main Webpage
  - [www.houstontx.gov](http://www.houstontx.gov)

Or Click [Here](#) To Email Us.